

IN THE CLAIMS

Please amend the claims as follows:

Claim 1 (Withdrawn): A high pressure processing method for processing a processing object under a high pressure, comprising the steps of:

bringing a high pressure fluid into collision with a surface of a processing object placed in a high pressure processing chamber; and

distributing the high pressure fluid along the surface of the processing object in an outward direction beyond the processing object.

Claim 2 (Withdrawn): The high pressure processing method as defined in claim 1, wherein the high pressure fluid is a supercritical or subcritical fluid.

Claim 3 (Withdrawn): The high pressure processing method as defined in claim 1, wherein the processing object is rotated about an axis orthogonal to the surface of the processing object, to allow the high pressure fluid brought into collision with the surface of the processing object to be distributed outward along the surface of the processing object.

Claim 4 (Withdrawn): The high pressure processing method as defined in claim 1, wherein the high pressure fluid is dispersed, and the dispersed high pressure fluid is brought into collision with the surface of the processing object.

Claim 5 (Withdrawn): The high pressure processing method as defined in claim 1, wherein the processing object is arranged in the high pressure processing chamber in such a manner that the surface of the processing object is faced upward, wherein the high pressure fluid is introduced from an upward position and in an approximately perpendicular direction

relative to the surface of the processing object, and then brought into collision with the surface of the processing object.

Claim 6 (Withdrawn): A high pressure processing method comprising the steps of:
placing a processing object in a high pressure processing chamber;
introducing a high pressure fluid into the high pressure processing chamber, and
setting the high pressure processing chamber to a predetermined temperature and pressure;
bringing the high pressure fluid into collision with the surface of the processing
object, distributing the high pressure fluid along the surface of the processing object in an
outward direction beyond the processing object, and discharging the high pressure fluid
outside the high pressure processing chamber, while maintaining the pressure of the high
pressure processing chamber;
reducing the pressure of the high pressure processing chamber to the atmospheric
pressure; and
taking the processing object out of the high pressure processing chamber.

Claim 7 (Currently Amended): A high pressure processing apparatus for supplying a
high pressure fluid to a processing object to apply a high pressure processing to the
processing object, the high pressure processing apparatus comprising:
a mounting table for supporting the processing object thereon;
a high pressure chamber adapted to contain the processing object therein, the high
pressure chamber having an introduction wall positioned above an entire surface of the
processing object on the mounting table and provided with a fluid introduction passage for
introducing the high pressure fluid into the high pressure chamber, the high pressure chamber

further having a side wall integrally linked to an outer peripheral part of the introduction wall and surrounding the mounting table;

~~a mounting table for supporting the processing object on the mounting table~~

a rotating mechanism adapted to rotate the processing object together with the mounting table;

a fluid dispersion mechanism for dispersing the flow of the high pressure fluid to be supplied toward the surface of the processing object from the fluid introduction passage; and

a fluid discharger for allowing the high pressure fluid supplied from the fluid dispersion mechanism to the surface of the processing object, to be distributed outward along the surface of the processing object, and discharged outside the high pressure chamber, the fluid discharger including a fluid discharge passage provided in the sidewall of the high pressure chamber at an outward position relative to the processing object;

wherein the fluid dispersion mechanism includes a closure plate formed with a plurality of through holes and placed between the introduction wall and the mounting table in opposed relation to the entire surface of the processing object on the mounting table and the introduction wall, the closure plate being fitted to an internal surface of the side wall of the high pressure chamber so as to make a gap with the introduction wall and allow the high pressure fluid introduced through the introduction passage to be supplied to the surface of the processing object through the gap and each of the through holes.

Claim 8 (Original): The high pressure processing apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein the fluid supplier is adapted to supply a supercritical fluid as the high pressure fluid to the processing object.

Claim 9 (Currently Amended): The high pressure processing apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein the ~~fluid discharger includes a~~ fluid discharge passage is provided in a ~~sidewall of the high pressure chamber at an outward position relative to the processing object~~ and approximately parallel to the surface of the processing object, to discharge the high pressure fluid outside the high pressure chamber.

Claims 10-12 (Canceled).

Claim 13 (Previously Presented): The high pressure processing apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein the plurality of through holes are formed concentrically with respect to the center of the surface of the processing object, wherein the respective diameters of the through holes are arranged such that the high pressure fluid passes through the through holes at approximately the same flow rate, and the distance between the circumferentially adjacent through holes is arranged such that it is reduced in the region of the closure plate opposed to the radially inward region of the surface of the processing object, more than in the region of the closure plate opposed to the peripheral region of the surface of the processing object.

Claims 14-15 (Canceled).

Claim 16 (Withdrawn): The high pressure processing apparatus as defined in claim 9, wherein the fluid discharge passage provided in the wall of the high pressure chamber at an outward position relative to the processing object and approximately parallel to the surface of the processing object is disposed in opposed relation to the peripheral edge of the processing object.

Claim 17 (Withdrawn): The high pressure processing apparatus as defined in claim 9, wherein the fluid introduction passage is provided in the wall of the high pressure chamber at a position opposed to the center of the surface of the processing object, wherein the wall of the high pressure chamber opposed to the surface of the processing object has a trumpet-shaped surface getting closer to the surface of the processing object in a direction oriented outward from the center of the surface of the processing object.

Claim 18 (Withdrawn): The high pressure processing apparatus as defined in claim 17, wherein the trumpet-shaped wall surface includes a hyperbolic surface.

Claim 19 (Withdrawn): The high pressure processing apparatus as defined in claim 17, wherein the trumpet-shaped wall surface is formed such that the distance from the center of the surface of the processing object along the surface of the processing object is approximately in inverse proportion to the distance between the surface of the processing object and the trumpet-shaped wall surface.

Claim 20 (Canceled).

Claim 21 (New): The high pressure processing apparatus as defined in claim 7, wherein the fluid supplier is adapted to supply a supercritical fluid as the high pressure fluid to the processing object.